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TROUT-FISHING
FOR BEGINNERS
BY
RICHARD CHAPPELL

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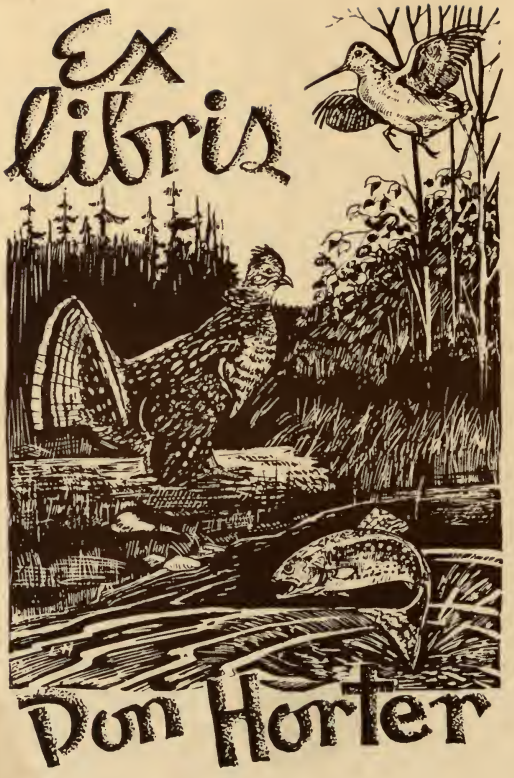

TROUT-FISHING FOR THE BEGINNER

By the same Author

FOX-HUNTING ON THE LAKELAND FELLS

ROUGH SHOOTING.

THE BOOK OF THE OTTER

TROUT-FISHING
FOR THE BEGINNER

BY

RICHARD CLAPHAM

WITH TWENTY-TWO DIAGRAMS BY THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK
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DEDICATED

TO MY WIFE

WHO HAS BEEN MY
COMPANION ON MANY
A PLEASANT TROUTING
EXPEDITION

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PREFACE

Although anglers are well supplied with books pertaining to their favourite sport, the majority of such volumes appeals more to the practised fisherman than the novice. Many a beginner, however, is dependent on books for information regarding trout-fishing and the tools of the craft, and naturally expects to find simple hints that will start him on the road to success.

The acquisition of an ill-balanced rod and unsuitable tackle tends to engender a slovenly method of fishing that is absolutely detrimental to good sport. A fair start, with a few simple but correct items of outfit, is everything ; the proper methods will then be cultivated from the beginning. It is, therefore, with the idea of helping the beginner that I have written this book, and I hope the information contained therein may prove useful to prospective anglers of both sexes.

R. CLAPHAM.

TROUTBECK,
WINDERMERE.

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CHAPTER I

THE TROUT

§ 1. *Appearance and surroundings.*

The common trout, or, to give him his scientific name, the *Salmo Fario*, is indigenous to the majority of the rivers and lakes of Great Britain. In beauty of appearance, courage, dash and general sport-showing qualities, he easily holds first place amongst our fishes. There are few prettier pictures in nature than a well-conditioned trout, with his small head, and depth of body, the whole overlaid with brilliant spots of colour.

Seldom do you find two trout exactly alike, for the colours vary considerably in individuals. While environment has much to do with colours and markings, the food supply is also an important factor. Trout from deep, dark holes are often exceedingly dull coloured; others taken from the gravelly or sandy reaches of a stream are generally

of a much lighter shade, and dotted with the most brilliant spots. Occasionally a single fish on a long stretch of water will be much more conspicuously coloured than his fellows. I have known of at least two instances of this, and succeeded in capturing both trout. Each one, when in the water, looked as yellow as a guinea, and when disturbed, was like a bar of gold shooting upstream. The food taken by these particular trout, no doubt, accounted for their conspicuous shade, although it seems strange that the other trout amongst which they dwelt were all so much darker.

Trout fed chiefly on mollusca become more or less dark in colour, with yellowish underparts and very bright red spots. On the other hand, a diet of daphnia and cyclops results in the fish taking on a silvery sheen, owing to certain light-reflecting spicules which appear on the scales. These spicules consist of a substance known as guanin, which is derived from rich animal food. As much of this is to be found in salt water, trout consequently acquire a silvery appearance, when they get into the habit of visiting the sea.

In this country, trout live in waters of very varied character. There are the slowly flowing chalk-streams of the south of Eng-

land, where insect and other food is plentiful; there the fish thrive and put on weight. This also applies to the trout of certain lakes. Whereas, in the Highlands, and the north of England, the trout of the burns and becks are often hard put to it to secure a bare sufficiency of food.

§ 2. *Spawning and growth.*

No matter what their surroundings, with the approach of autumn the trout migrate to the spawning beds, there to reproduce their kind. Often they are held up on the way owing to lack of sufficient water, but sooner or later a flood comes, and they leave the pools and race forward to their destination. Either *en route*, or on arrival, the male trout selects a female, and the spawning process begins. The female fish does all the work, fanning away the gravel with her tail, until she has made a hollow known as a "redd." Into this she sheds her eggs, and as the male fish fertilizes them, by the same fanning process she covers them with gravel and keeps moving slowly forward. The spawning period lasts for several days, after which the females gradually drop downstream. The fish are then thin and completely out of condition. The males do not

invariably go down at the same time as their wives, but often remain not far from the spawning grounds, descending to deep water at a later period.

Roughly speaking, the ova lie for some three months in the gravel, according to the temperature of the water. Prior to the birth of the *alevins*, as the newly hatched troutlets are called, these eggs go through a precarious existence. Not only do water-fowl, rats, eels, insects and larvæ feed upon them when they can, but both young trout and late-spawning fish greedily devour them. Some ova may be buried by floods which wash up tons of gravel, or the water may freeze solid in winter, which means that the eggs are crushed beneath the ice. Only a small percentage of the eggs hatch, which is not surprising when we consider the exigencies of their surroundings.

When first they see the light, the *alevins* are not fond of it, and so bury themselves in the gravel. Later on, however, they begin to bestir themselves, hiding behind the stones. Here again they run the gauntlet of their enemies the eels, larvæ, caddis-worms and so on, and their ranks are still further reduced. Until some weeks old, each *alevin* is provided with a yolk sac, from

which it derives nourishment. Gradually, however, the sac disappears, and the little fish is able to swim and go in search of food such as water-fleas, etc. Thus, as they gain strength, the *alevins* are capable of turning the tables on their smaller enemies, and "get a bit of their own back" from the larvæ and caddis-worms. With the return of the adult spawning trout in autumn, the *alevins* (or fry) succeed in devouring a certain number of the eggs. They are, however, still obliged to keep an eye open for their enemies, which now include the spawning fish; as well as eels, kingfishers and the like.

By the following spring, those *alevins* which survive are known as yearlings, and they then begin to drop down into deeper water. By the time he is a two-year-old, the trout may be from six to twelve inches in length; and in their third year the females join the throng *en route* to the spawning grounds, where they deposit their eggs. With luck a trout *may* reach old age, but if he does he becomes hook-jawed and lanky; and he loses all the brilliant colouring of his younger days.

§ 3. *Vision, hearing and smell.*

In addition to being endowed with remarkable activity, trout in power of vision are

extraordinarily acute. This is one of the first things the angler will discover when he makes his initial attempts to lure them to his hook. Unless you keep exactly behind them and tread warily, your sole reward will be the sight of a shoal of trout fleeing for their lives. The vision of a trout, however, is limited by the amount and colour of the water. In a flood, or when the spate is subsiding, you can stand and cast your line across or downstream without disturbing him in the least, but try the same thing in summer, when the water is at its lowest and clearest, and he will have none of you. I have noticed on many occasions when fishing hill-streams, that an addition of an inch or two of fresh water makes all the difference between approaching trout with ease, and being obliged to adopt the most careful stalking tactics. Apparently a very slight increase in the volume of water is sufficient to make the fish approachable. They seize insects just as readily then as when the water is low, but their angle of vision, as far as the fisherman is concerned, appears to alter in the latter's favour.

Occasionally one meets an angler who persists in lowering his voice when in pursuit of trout, for fear that they will hear him.

As a matter of fact, trout appear to pay not the least attention to noise of any kind outside the water. You may fire a gun, or shout as loud as you like, and the fish will still lie there quite unconcernedly, so long as you don't show yourself or make any sudden movement within their range of vision.

In the case of vibration, however, the trout is susceptible enough. The ripples caused by incautious wading, or the heavy tread of an awkward foot on the bank, are sufficient to cause him to run for safety. To kill trout successfully in low, clear water, the angler must keep out of sight, or in other words behind his fish, and when close to them, move quite slowly. Many a time have I waded slowly up a pool from the lower end, when the water was as clear as crystal, and every movement of the trout lying there was plainly visible. One occasion comes vividly to mind, when by careful work I managed to hook and bring to net three brace out of a shoal of sizeable fish. Under such conditions, however, each fish hooked must be instantly hustled down-stream before the alarm is conveyed to his neighbours.

As to the trout's sense of smell, no doubt

its olfactory organs enable it to find food, otherwise how can we account for a trout taking a worm or other bait when the river is thick with flood water? Whether the trout's nose warns him of the approach of his under-water enemies or not we do not know, but it is pretty certain that his eyes alone are his chief defence against the approach of human intruders. Fish apparently owe their security from foes of their own kind to the fact that the tone and colour of their surroundings is reflected from their bodies. The result is, they appear to other fish as mere ghost-like forms.

§ 4. *Feeding.*

The growth, size, weight and edible qualities of trout depend upon the quality and amount of food they can secure. The larger and heavier a trout becomes, the less eager is he to rise at flies, confining his attentions chiefly to bottom-food, and to the lesser individuals of his own kind. That trout possess cannibalistic habits at a very early age I have proved over and over again when minnow fishing. Using an artificial quill minnow, 1¼ in. in length, I have constantly captured fish little if any larger than the minnow itself. Again, if a post-mortem

is held on a number of trout brought to net, some of them are sure to contain evidence confirming the above view. In rocky, hard-bottomed streams, little food accumulates for the fish, as such rivers are constantly liable to sudden floods. Trout in these streams are late in getting into condition, whereas the fish of the chalk-streams in the south of England where the current is slow, and the banks and bottom soft, are more forward, owing to the superiority of the food supply.

§ 5. *Is fishing cruel?*

From time to time the supposed cruelty of fishing forms a subject for discussion. Although a trout contains blood, and is often distinctly warm to the touch when taken out of a cold stream, there is ample evidence to prove that its sense of feeling or pain is practically nil. On several occasions I have taken trout which showed the result of old wounds, some of the latter having been of such a severe nature that only a practically nerveless creature could have survived them. Any angler of experience can bring forward evidence to the same effect. I remember fly-fishing one day on a hill-stream, when a trout of about 4 oz. rose to the fly, missed it, rose again, and

was hooked. It fought remarkably well for its size, and when finally brought to net, a length of coarse gut was seen to be protruding from its mouth. On opening it, a bait hook was found well down in its stomach, yet neither the hook nor the gut attached to it seemed to inconvenience the fish in the least. The trout was in capital condition, and this seems to prove that a wound that would very soon finish an animal or a human being is a mere bagatelle to a fish.

§ 6. *The seasons: when and where to fish.*

A knowledge of the places in which trout lie during different periods of the season is necessary for successful angling. Although the season opens in some districts as early as February, April is soon enough to begin fishing, as prior to that date the trout are not in good condition. In April the best sport will be had in the pools. There in the deeper parts trout frequent the sides, but the majority prefer the shallow water at the pool-foot. In May the fish are greatly improved in condition, and move into stronger water. They will be found about the heads of the pools, and scattered to some extent throughout the streams. Towards the end of the month they are in prime condition,

and inhabit the strong streams and broken water generally. There they take up feeding stations behind stones, under banks, or in any place that affords them shelter. Early in June they begin to exhibit a disinclination to accept the angler's flies, becoming exceedingly capricious in their behaviour. In this month the Mayfly makes its appearance, and where there is a good hatch of fly, the trout gorge to repletion. From June to August, fly-fishing during the day is often a profitless business, but at sunset the fish rise freely, and frequently continue to do so during the night. . . . June and July are the months in which the clear-water worm should be used. At this season trout lie in shallow water, and I have captured many a fish which showed a portion of its back above the surface. The worm during the day, and the fly at dusk, form a killing combination under midsummer conditions. . . . August, especially the latter end of it, is a good month for the fly, but the trout begin to show a visible falling off in condition. In September they leave the streams and return to the pools. They still rise freely, and some fairly well-conditioned fish will be taken, affording sport until the month-end, when fishing ceases.

During midsummer, that is in May, June and July, trout take the minnow freely, and when the water is raised by rain, sport is almost certain. The best time in a flood is when the water is rising, and again when the flow is subsiding. The trout take minnow more or less throughout the season, but the aforementioned months are most profitable to the angler.

We have already mentioned the fact that trout, when in condition, take up their own individual feeding stations. A fish rising at a fly will, whether he seize his prey or not, always come back to the exact spot he started from. His movements are generally extremely rapid, so fast in fact that the eye can barely follow them. If disturbed from his particular hover, a trout is not as a rule long in returning to it. His memory is really quite short, and he soon forgets what were doubtless for him unpleasant incidents. Anyone can easily prove this by watching carefully the place from which a disturbed trout has fled ; and it is surprising what little effect such disturbances have on the fish in the generality of cases.

As previously mentioned, trout often lie with their backs partially out of water during the hot weather in June and July.

I remember on one occasion watching a trout cruising round a very shallow pool, which was divided from another pool of like nature by a bar of sand and gravel. Evidently tiring of its surroundings, the fish proceeded to wriggle across the wet gravel, and arrived safely in the second pool. I then dropped a small hackle fly just in front of its nose; and it took the lure greedily, eventually finding its way into my basket.

§ 7. *Drainage, poachers, etc.; fishing a national asset.*

In the old days, before the drainage of land was thoroughly taken in hand, our streams were less liable to sudden floods. To-day a river may be running bank-high in the morning, and by evening it will be nearly at its normal level; whereas in our grandfathers' time, the same stream kept pretty full for a week or more after a spate, and its lowest level was then much higher than is the case now. With surface water finding its way gradually to the river, trout food, in the shape of insects, larvæ, etc., plus the mud on which many of the aquatic insects live, was more likely to last longer than is possible now when a sudden rush of water is liable to carry everything before it.

In addition to lack of food caused by floods, trout have nowadays to put up with a deal of discomfort in the way of refuse from mills, roads, etc., which finds its way into the rivers. In many instances whole stretches of water have been depleted of trout owing to this cause, and until something is done to counteract the evil, it is only waste of money to restock.

In many streams, again, the normal level of the water is now so low that the fish suffer considerably from the attentions of poachers. This is particularly noticeable in autumn, when the trout are running up to the spawning beds. Many of them are temporarily stranded in the pools, and the poacher, with his net or spear, proceeds to work his wicked will by capturing scores of fish which would otherwise help to swell the existing stock.

Good trout fishing is a great asset to any country district, and many of our city corporations are well aware of the fact, as witness the successful handling of such reservoirs as Blagdon and Vyrnwy, where the fly-fishing is of the finest in the kingdom. When we think of the amount of sport that trout afford to rich and poor alike, for in many districts, more particularly in the north and

west, the working-man has access to the rivers, it behoves us to do all in our power to keep up the existing stock of fish. The gamest of the game in his native element, and a dainty addition to the menu, there are few if any creatures more generally appreciated than the trout.

CHAPTER II

ARTIFICIAL FLY-FISHING

§ 1. *The supremacy of fly-fishing over other kinds, as an art and a sport.*

Of all the methods of capturing trout, fly-fishing is the cleanest and most sportsmanlike. There is no messing with slippery baits or wriggling worms, no impaling of natural insects on a hook, from which they flop off on the slightest pretext; but instead the fish are lured with a fly of steel and feather, dressed in imitation of one or other of the multitudinous creatures which flutter about the water during the warm summer weather. Once become enamoured of the art, and you are a fly-fisher for life. Armed with a light rod, and a few casts and flies, you are free to wander by your favourite stream, and cast your feathered lures like thistledown upon the surface, where the ever-widening rings mark the whereabouts of rising trout. Whether you visit

the placid chalk-stream, the brawling beck, or the crag-bound mountain tarn, the attraction is ever the same. Drawn on by the hope of sport, you find yourself in places where otherwise you might never have ventured, and in your wanderings you gain an intimate knowledge of nature in all her varying moods. The sights and sounds of summer are on every hand. Down in the valleys the woods resound with bird music, while on the heath-clad hills the go back! go back! of the grouse, and the shrill wail of the curlew, seem fitting in their wild surroundings.

As you pass through woods and fields, or climb the mountain's brow, the silvery stream at last appears in view, winding in and out amongst the sedges, or cascading over boulders. Instinctively you quicken your footsteps, all eager once more to test your skill. Hurriedly you set up the rod, run the line through the rings, and attach a cast of flies. You spare a moment to fill a pipe and light it, then, cautiously approaching the bank, you send the feathered lures upon their journey. They fall, softly as a snowflake, just above the spot where the brown nose of a trout broke the surface. A moment of expectancy as the flies drift down,

a brief stoppage of the line, and a quick movement of your wrist drives home the steel—you are fast in the first trout of the day. Wildly the fish dashes this way and that, sometimes throwing himself into the air, but by degrees his valiant struggles weaken, and at last he turns on his side and submits to be drawn across the net submerged beneath him.

It is a lively and graceful art, this luring and capturing of trout by means of a tiny hook and gossamer tackle. There is nothing coarse or clumsy about it, no "pull devil, pull baker" business, but a system of give and take, with hand and eye ever on the alert to counteract the gyrations of the struggling captive. Nor does luck invariably favour the angler. A too hasty strike, or a too sudden pressure on the line may instantly sever the cast, and then the rod flies straight, leaving the fisherman lamenting, while a trout with "a fly in one cheek, and his tongue in the other," betakes himself to some hidden retreat, there to cogitate over the machinations of mankind. Even your most expert fly-fisherman has his trials. It is not all sweets, when things go right from early morn till dusk. No, there *are* days when the spirit of mischief seems to be abroad,

and very successfully does that same spirit involve the angler in various trying contre-temps. Sometimes fish after fish is lost at the last moment, sometimes the cast *will* tie itself up, particularly if you are fishing in the neighbourhood of trees or bushes. When these things happen, there is nothing for it but a good hearty swear, unless you follow the Scotchman's plan:

"The flask frae my pocket
I poured into the socket,
For I was provokit unto the last degree;
And to my way o' thinkin',
There's naething for't but drinkin',
When a trout he lies winkin' and lauchin' at me."

While trout take a minnow with great dash, affording an exciting moment, as the sudden tremor is imparted via the rod to the angler's arm, the thrill is greater still when a good fish rises at the fly. He comes quickly, and with confidence, especially in fast water, where he has to take it or leave it, there being no time for hesitation. As his mouth closes over the fly, there ensues a tightening of the line, and the tiny barbed hook is sent well home. Then and then only does the trout realize that he has made a mistake and got hold of one of the peculiar species of insects which possess "hot feet."

One of the great advantages of fly-fishing lies in the fact that it is applicable to every variety of water, from the placid lake to the roaring stream. It is also the most difficult phase of the angler's art. Clear-water worm fishing runs it close, but in the one case you are angling with an artificial insect, and in the other with the genuine article in the shape of a worm. It is easier to deceive with the natural than the artificial, and for this reason fly-fishing must certainly take the palm as being the more difficult of the two.

§ 2. *Upstream fishing.*

In low, clear water, the man who can kill a basket of trout by fishing the fly upstream is a master of his art. Until comparatively recent times, it was the custom to fly-fish downstream. Fish can certainly be killed in that way, especially when there is a good volume of water, but it is working on a wrong principle, i.e. advancing in front of the fish instead of keeping behind them. Again, when a trout seizes the fly, the least jerk or movement of the angler's wrist pulls the line away, whereas in fishing up, a quick strike sends the hook home, *into* the trout's mouth. Then, during the ensuing battle, the captive can be rushed downstream at

once, and the fight finished in water which has already been disturbed. When fishing up, the flies are allowed to be borne down by the current in a more or less natural manner, whereas in downstream angling they are often dragged across the current, or "worked" in some unnatural way by the fisherman. Trout seize the natural insect at the moment it alights on the water, or when it is borne down in a more or less battered condition beneath the surface. An enfeebled insect cannot possibly attempt to stem the current, so resigns itself to its fate, and is carried down willy-nilly. The angler who "works" his flies does so no doubt with the idea of imparting to them an appearance of life, whereas he would secure a much more natural effect by dressing his flies of soft materials, and allowing the current to do the "working." Trout *will* take flies, even when dragged across or upstream, but the fish which do so are usually the very smallest, whereas in upstream angling many heavy trout will be secured. Upstream fishing is certainly more difficult than casting the flies across and down, but it should be steadily persevered with if the angler wishes to become a really proficient exponent of the art.

§ 3. *Downstream fishing.*

Although in slow and medium water, upstream casting should be followed; in rough, fast water, the downstream method often pays better. We have already seen how a slight additional volume of water in a stream appears to limit the trout's vision, and so makes them approachable; the same thing applies to the rapids. There apparently trout do not rise at insects as they do in quieter portions of the river, for unless a fly appears practically right in front or over them, they ignore it. The fish in the strong water are usually well fed, large and in good condition, their food supply being taken from the river-bed or very near it. There are, of course, many insects on and about the rapids, but the fish seem disinclined to go out of their way to take them, owing chiefly, I think, to the fact that their vision is to some extent obscured by the flow. It is difficult when casting up in very rough water to make the flies come down in a natural manner owing to the speed of the current, and the lures often become entangled with the main cast a second or so after alighting. This is likely to alarm the trout, whereas by casting across and down, any drag on the flies is unnoticed in the turbu-

lence, and a trout seeing one of the flies at all is quite likely to go for it. At any rate, I have on scores of occasions fished carefully up a rapid, and have then repeated the operation downstream, to the great improvement of the bag.

In slow or medium water, a downstream fly can be seen by a trout as it advances, as it passes him, and when taking its departure. The fish has time to inspect it, and if he thinks it is one of the "hot feet" variety, he ignores it. In the rapids, however, his first view of the lure is practically coincident with his rush to take it, for, owing to the speed of its passage, he must make up his mind on the instant. When the trout seizes such a fly, he frequently turns round and down; thus the hook goes home, for the line is kept taut by the current, and the fish practically hooks himself. Once firmly hooked, he instinctively runs further downstream, and so assurance of a good hookhold is made doubly sure, as long as the angler does not bring *too* much pressure to bear and thereby cause a smash.

It always pays to fish the rapids, even when trout are not rising in the deeper water. In the latter, when not alert for flies, the trout lie near the bottom, and so may not

always see your lures. In the rapids, on the other hand, the water is comparatively shallow, and even if lying near the bottom, a fish or two may be tempted, because they can hardly fail to see the flies.

§ 4. *The month of May; and "Mayflies."*

Of all months in the year, May is the best for fly-fishing. In addition to the beauty of one's surroundings at that season, the trout are then in the best of condition and take our artificials freely. It is rather an anomaly that the Mayfly—one of the largest insects to make its appearance on and about the water—seldom shows up in any numbers till June, but when it *does* come, the trout devour it greedily, even the largest fish bestirring themselves at this time. Very heavy baskets are often made during the rise of this fly, and because even the veriest tyro can sometimes prove successful, the period has come to be known as "The duffer's fortnight."

CHAPTER III

THE ANGLER'S OUTFIT

§ 1. *The rod.*

The beginner will be well advised to commence with a sound but simple outfit; with this let him practise diligently, since experience is the best teacher.

The rod is the most important item and should be chosen with care. For all-round work on stream or lake, a rod of from 9 feet to 10 feet 6 inches will be found suitable. A stiffish fly-rod will suffice also for both minnow and worm fishing, until such time as the novice has become proficient, and hankers after special tools.

"Built" rods, or, in other words, rods made of strips of split bamboo glued or cemented together, are expensive, but they possess certain advantages over wooden rods. As the outer skin of the bamboo is preserved intact, wet has little effect upon it; and on account of the straightness of

the grain, the material is immensely strong. Bamboo also does not shrink like wood, and therefore is admirably suited to carry any form of metal ferrules. A rod so constructed is not only extremely resilient but also extraordinarily tough, and practically unbreakable, given anything like fair usage. Wooden rods are made of greenheart, blue mahoe, steelwood, lancewood and hickory. In some cases hickory and greenheart, or whole cane and greenheart, are used in conjunction. Greenheart is the most widely used rod wood, and though it is brittle and liable to break under sudden strain, unless particularly straight in the grain, a rod composed of it forms a mettlesome weapon, well suited to delicate fly-fishing. Wooden rods may be strengthened and stiffened by the addition of phosphor-bronze wire wrapping, wound round the outside of the joints in diamond formation. I have used a rod with a whole cane butt and greenheart top so wired for some years, and it has thoroughly proved its worth. Wooden rods, having no outer skin, suffer to some extent from wet, unless they are kept varnished.

Being a delicate instrument, a rod is liable to damage in the hands of a novice, and for this reason a split bamboo is best suited to

withstand the exigences of the beginner's first season. Should he, nevertheless, prefer to choose a greenheart rod, let him go to a first-class maker, who will provide him with sound material, absolutely straight in the grain. Split bamboo, it is true, is more expensive than greenheart, but lasts longer. With a well-made split-bamboo rod of 9 feet or 10 feet the beginner can afford to take liberties, whereas a greenheart needs careful usage.

In order to throw the cast of flies accurately and neatly, the rod must not be too lissome or whippy. It should be fairly stiff and resilient—like a fine, well-tempered steel blade—and should spring right from the butt. It is the spring of the rod, and not the angler's arm, that is responsible for the throwing of the flies; therefore, a mettlesome weapon is much preferable to one which shows an inclination to droop.

Next in importance to stiffness and resiliency, comes balance, for unless a rod is balanced properly, even an expert angler will fail to do good work with it. In the great majority of cases the point of balance, when the rod is laid across the angler's finger, is much too far from the butt, and so the rod is top-heavy. With a suitable

reel attached, a rod should balance at a point not more than 8 inches from the centre of the reel-seat, and if the novice will get the maker so to balance the weapon at the time of purchase, he will acquire a neat, clean style of casting much more quickly and easily than if he used a top-heavy rod such as is so often supplied by the trade. Even if the rod balances at a point under the 8 inches, its utility is in no way impaired; all the weight is then in the butt, and being in the hand is consequently not appreciably felt. The addition of a modern light-weight aluminium-alloy reel is no detriment to the balance, but I prefer a rod to balance without a reel attached. If one possesses several rods so balanced, a single reel will suffice for use with all of them. Balance should not be corrected by means of a lighter or heavier reel, but by the addition of weight in the shape of lead let into the butt of the rod. The actual weight of a rod, if correctly balanced, need give the angler very little concern; a rod, the centre of gravity of which is at the right point, would have to be very heavy indeed before its user would be incommoded by its weight.

Rods of from 9 feet to 10 feet 6 in. in

length are usually made in two or three joints. The fewer the joints, the less will the spring and power of the rod be affected. Split-bamboo rods can be had in one piece, and these are excellent for anyone who lives close to a stream or lake. For convenience of transport by rail or motor, jointed rods are of course preferable. Rod joints are of the plain suction type or the "lock-fast" variety. There are several of the latter pattern, all of which are satisfactory. The "lock-fast" joint is slightly heavier than the suction joint, but is firmer than the latter, and entirely eliminates any chance of the several portions of the rod working loose in action. The handle or "hand grasp" portion of the rod butt may be of plain wood or cork-covered. Cork is easier on the hand, and gives a firmer grip; it is convenient too for sticking the tail fly of the cast into, when the angler is resting or moving from place to place. The metal ferrules which compose the joint or joints may occasionally show signs of looseness on wooden rods owing to a slight shrinking of the wood, whereas with bamboo rods this does not happen.

Reiterating the desirable qualities in the rod, we have stiffness and resiliency, and in

the case of the split bamboo, toughness. If to the above is added perfect balance, we possess a weapon which combines power and accuracy in casting to a marked degree. Fitted with such a rod, the beginner acquires correct style from the first, and avoids bad habits that have to be unlearnt later. . . . There are plenty of cheap—and in most cases nasty—rods on the market, and the beginner will be well advised to make his initial purchase from some well-known maker, whose price may perhaps be thought a trifle high, but whose goods will be found the cheapest and most satisfactory in the long run.

§ 2. *The reel.*

Holding the line, and attached to the rod by a simple fastening, is the reel. Reels are now made narrow and deep, to ensure quick winding, and are generally constructed of aluminium-alloy. This material is light; the only drawback is that when wet a white oxide forms upon it. If this oxide, however, is wiped off on the angler's return it in no way impairs the metal. For a 9-foot or 10-foot rod, a 3-inch reel such as Hardy's "Uniqua" pattern will be found quite suitable. I must warn the beginner against the purchase of cheap reels, many of which

to all outward appearances are sound enough. I was myself badly had on one occasion with a reel of this sort, the interior working parts of which were composed of brass instead of steel. A good reel, which will quickly come apart for cleaning and oiling purposes, may prove a bit expensive at first, but it will last a lifetime with ordinary usage.

§ 3. *The line.*

The line runs from the reel through rings attached to the rod. These rings are of two patterns, i.e. "snake" and "bridge." The latter are to be preferred, as they keep the line clear of the rod, and in wet weather prevent it from sticking or dragging. In order to work properly, the thickness and weight of the line must be in proportion to the power and spring of the rod. A very light line takes quite as much out of a rod as a line that is too heavy. The beginner, if left to choose for himself, is likely to err on the side of lightness, for usually the correct line is rather thicker than he will think proper. Any of the first-class rod makers will supply a line most suitable to the length and power of the rod, and the choice is therefore best left to them. Lines may be had single- and double-tapered, but the beginner will find a

parallel line, i.e. one which is all of the same thickness, best for his purpose. Here again it is advisable to purchase the best one can afford, for a really well-made line will last for many seasons. After use, if wet, it should be hung in loose coils in a warm room to dry, for a wet line left on a reel is liable to rot, even if made of the best material.

§ 4. *The cast and gut.*

Attached to the line is the cast, to which the fly or flies are fastened. The cast was in former days composed of horse-hair, but gut has now taken its place. Gut casts vary in length, 3 yards being the usual measurement. With a 9-foot rod, I personally prefer a cast of from 7 feet 6 inches to 8 feet, so that the gut is never likely to be drawn through the tip-ring of the rod when reeling in a fish Casts may be had parallel or tapered; the beginner will find the latter best suited to his requirements. The thinner the cast, the better; but due consideration must, of course, be given to the average size of the fish likely to be caught. The beginner, however, will be well advised to fish with a cast of medium thickness, until he has acquired sufficient delicacy of control in the handling of his rod. A cast tapering from, say, stout

trout to 3x will about meet the question. As the line forms a continuous taper with the rod, the tapered cast is in keeping with it. Should a fish, or careless handling on the angler's part, break the cast, a tapered one will not be altogether lost, for the gut will part at the thinnest point; a level cast on the other hand, may break close to the line. There are various cheap substitutes for gut on the market, but none of them are to be recommended. Good gut is more or less expensive, but the best is the cheapest in the long run. Before being used or tied, gut should be soaked in cold water until it becomes soft and pliant, otherwise it will break.

§ 5. *The position of the flies on the cast; wet fly and dry fly fishing.*

In wet fly fishing, i.e. when using the flies partially or wholly submerged, three flies are fastened to the cast by short lengths of gut; on a small stream two flies are often sufficient. The end fly is known as the tail fly, and the two above it as the droppers. Roughly speaking, the first dropper should be attached about 3 feet above the tail fly, and the second dropper the same distance above the first; this distance may be shortened on a small stream, or two flies may be used instead of

three. In dry fly fishing, of which I shall speak later, the fly is built up on an eyed hook, and attached directly to the fine end of the cast. Eyed hooks are unsuitable for dropper flies, as they have too much play, and are constantly becoming entangled with the main cast. An eyed fly may, however, be used as the tail fly of a cast, in which position its free play will enhance rather than spoil its attractiveness.

The dropper flies should not hang lower than 3 inches from the cast, for, if they do, they continually become entangled with it. The shorter the gut to which they are attached, the better will they stand out from the cast; but if they are too close they are apt to be more or less alarming to the trout.

§ 6. *Knots.*

The following knots will be found suitable for mending a broken gut cast; attaching the

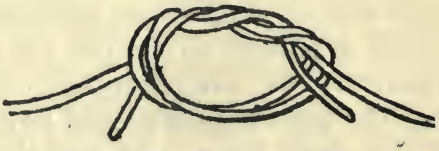

Fig. 1.—Double Water Knot.

cast to the reel line; fastening tail and dropper flies to the cast and eyed flies to the gut.

No. 1 represents the Double Water Knot. This may be tied single, but is liable to slip when so tied.

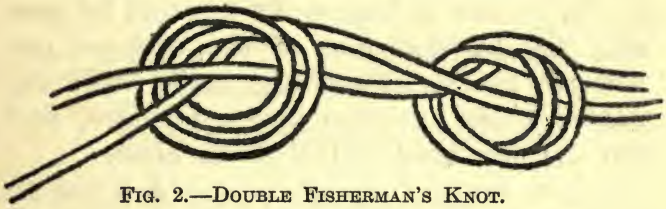

FIG. 2.—DOUBLE FISHERMAN'S KNOT.

No. 2 is the Double Fisherman's Knot, which is also liable to slip, if tied single.

Both these knots are used in mending a

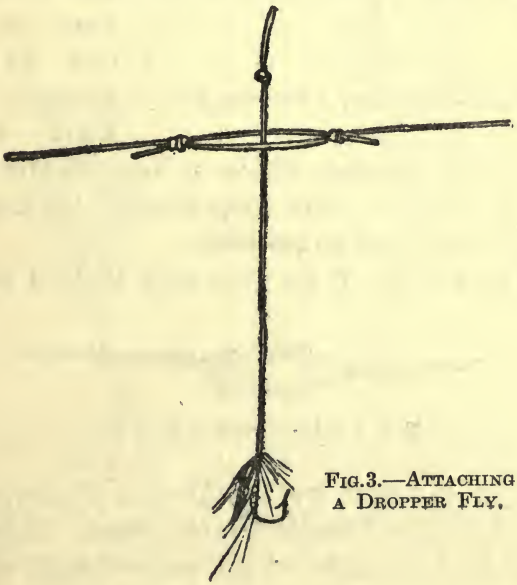

FIG. 3.—ATTACHING A DROPPER FLY.

broken gut cast, or in making up a new cast.

When the Fisherman's Knot is used, the two portions of it may be pulled apart, as in *Fig.* 3, and a dropper fly inserted by passing the knotted end of the dropper gut between the strands of the main cast; the double knots are then drawn together, and the dropper knot pulled down close.

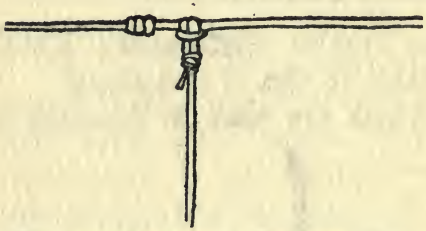

Fig. 4.—Attaching a Dropper Fly.

Another method of attaching a dropper is to tie a small loop at the end of the dropper gut, and then fasten the dropper above a knot on the cast, as in *Fig.* 4. The loop should be kept as small and neat as possible.

The tail fly, if on gut, may be tied to the

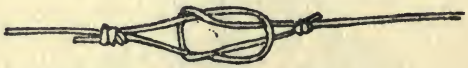

Fig 5.—Attaching a Tail Fly.

end of the cast by the Double Fisherman's Knot or the Double Water Knot. Another way that permits of an easy change of fly

is by looping the end of gut cast and dropper gut, and then passing the fly through loop as in *Fig.* 5.

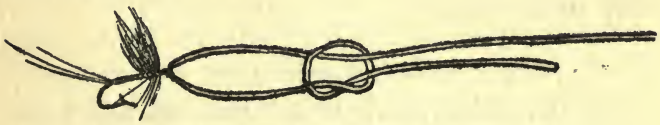

FIG. 6.—ATTACHING AN EYED FLY TO GUT.

Fig. 6 shows a suitable knot for attaching an eyed fly to gut.

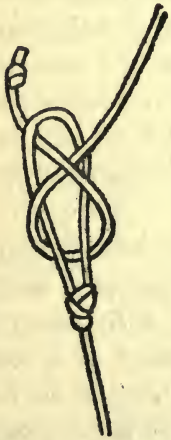

FIG. 7.—TO FORM A JAM KNOT.

FIG. 8.—TILLER HITCH, USED FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

Figs. 7 *and* 8 show two Jam Knots suitable for attaching the gut cast to the reel

line. *Fig.* 8 is known as the "Tiller Hitch." It is rather clumsy, but can be easily untied in the dark by a pull on the loose-end of the main line.

§ 7. *Always soak your gut.*

Before attempting to tie gut, again let me warn the beginner to be sure to soak it well in cold water, until it becomes thoroughly soft and pliable. A made-up cast should likewise be soaked before commencing to fish. It saves time to soak the cast at home, and then place it in a metal cast case between sheets of damp felt. The cast will then be perfectly pliable on arrival at the water-side. After use, casts should be dried before being put away in the fly-book, for if left in the damper case the hooks soon become rusty.

§ 8. *Fly-book, basket and landing-net.*

In addition to the items already enumerated, the novice will require a fly receptacle of some kind, which may consist of a leather pocket-book with a compartment at each end, and a number of parchment pages containing smaller pockets, a basket or bag, and, where fish run to any size, a landing-net. At any good tackle makers he will find ample choice of these things. A wicker creel takes up more

room than a bag, but it keeps fish in better condition, as it crushes them less. As far as the landing-net is concerned, a folding pattern is the handiest for river fishing; but on a lake, when one is fishing from a boat, a long-handled net is a decided advantage, since leverage can be obtained in lifting a heavy trout by resting a portion of the net-handle under one's elbow.

§ 9. *The "Catherine Wheel" holder; the landing-net carrier; the cast damper.*

As the beginner gains experience, he will by degrees keep adding various other items

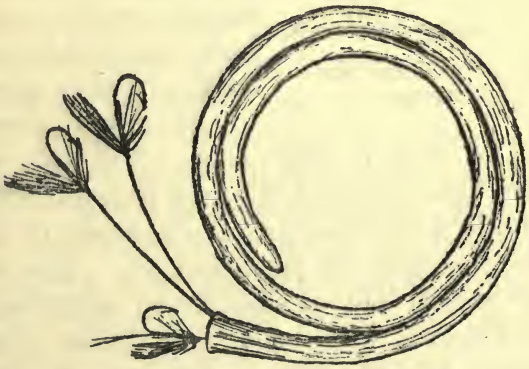

Fig. 9.—"Catherine Wheel" Holder.

—useful and otherwise—to his angling outfit. One of the handiest little contrivances for

holding flies to gut is known as the "Catherine Wheel" holder. It consists of a circular celluloid tube, into which the lengths of gut are easily slipped, and out of which a single fly to gut can be just as easily extracted when required. The whole thing fits comfortably into a pocket of the fly-book. Another handy article is a landing-net carrier, consisting of a metal ring attached to a strong safety pin; this pin can be stuck into one's jacket in a convenient position, and saves carrying the net on the basket strap, where it is always more or less in the way. Mention has already been made of the cast damper. This is usually a circular metal box, made of aluminium, copper, or japanned tin. The two latter metals are prerfeable to aluminium, as it oxidizes when wet, and if the sheets of damp felt are left in the box for long, they cause holes to appear in the lid or bottom of the damper.

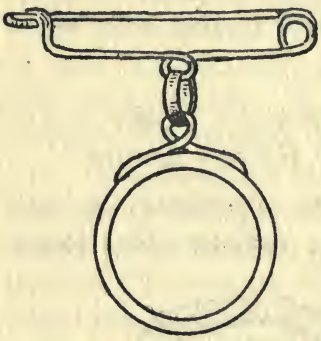

FIG. 10.—LANDING-NET CARRIER.

§ 10. *Waders.*

In order to fish the majority of streams properly, it is necessary to wade, and for this reason a pair of waders should be added to the outfit. These may be had in the form of wading stockings or breeches, over the feet of which are worn thick woollen socks and brogues. The socks prevent the entrance of grit between the brogues and stockings, but they themselves become waterlogged and clumsy. Handy, though at the present time somewhat expensive, are the combined waders, consisting of stockings with light but substantial footgear permanently attached. We much prefer them to all other forms of waders. Cheap and more or less efficient waders can now be had in the shape of the hip-length rubber boots, as worn in the trenches. The rubber heels can be nailed, but the soles cannot be so treated. If, however, one gets a pair of light "ice creepers" made, consisting of a metal frame or sole, with spikes attached, they can be strapped to the feet, and most effectually prevent slipping on a stony river-bed.

CHAPTER IV

ARTIFICIAL FLIES

§ 1. *Two theories why fish take the artificial fly.*

Just how or when the first artificial trout fly was made it is impossible to tell. No doubt some old-time hunter noticed that the fish were feeding on certain insects, and, finding that the insects were not particularly lasting when affixed to a crude hook, he thereupon attempted to construct a serviceable imitation. Since then great improvements have taken place in fly tying, until to-day we have imitations of most of the insects found on and about our lakes and rivers, plus a good many "fancy" flies, which have no prototypes amongst the naturals. An artificial fly is, of course, designed with the idea of deceiving trout. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the closer it is in appearance to the natural insect, the more will the fish approve of it. Now, there are

two schools of anglers, one of which believes in the efficiency of what we may term the exact imitation trout fly, while the other believes that the fish, when in a feeding humour, will take any pattern of fly, so long as it is not abnormal in size or shape.

If we collect a variety of natural insects and lay them alongside our artificials, it does not require a microscope to discover the fact that even the neatest and best tied of imitations is extremely crude in comparison with the beautiful, ethereal creatures which spend their brief lives near the water. The natural insects are either up-winged, or flat-winged. The former carry their wings straight up above their backs when at rest, while the latter hold theirs in close proximity to their bodies. Artificial flies are tied in like manner, feathers, silk, tinsel, etc., being used to represent the various parts; and many are so well tied that to human eyes they appear satisfactory enough when out of water; but once they are submerged, they take on quite a different appearance.

Seeing that it is a fact that even the best of our artificial flies are but crude representations of their natural prototypes, there is reason for supposing that trout are not so particular in their choice as some people

would have us believe. There come certain days in every season when the fish take the flies so ravenously that they could hardly exhibit greater eagerness, and they continue to seize them even after the major portion of the dressing has been torn away. Now, if a trout possessed a keen eye for detail in the insects on which he feeds, he would never accept our artificials at all, for even in our eyes these artificials are very far from being exact copies. Then, again, certain of our flies are tied as hackles, or "spiders," i.e. without wings. Most of these spiders are very lightly dressed, with spare silk bodies and soft feather hackles. Out of the water they bear no resemblance to any particular insect, but when submerged, with their soft feathers flickering to the action of the current, they prove very attractive to the fish.

§ 2. *Size and shape in an artificial fly are of more importance in deceiving a fish than colour and minor details.*

Thus, although many anglers set great store by the colour and details of their artificial flies, practical experience leads us to believe that size and shape are of far greater importance. Trout are full of curiosity, for they will rise to investigate matches, shreds

of tobacco, and various other objects thrown upon the water. Some of these things a fish will take into its mouth and then spit out again; so it is not exactly surprising that they accept our crudely tied flies, under the impression that they are genuine. Seen through the medium of a certain volume of water, and particularly if the water is in motion, an artificial fly must appear as a kind of blur, or as a silhouette against a background of sky. The fly may indeed show a certain amount of iridescence, but the actual colour or colours of the dressing are lost. For this reason we are of the opinion, having practically tested the matter on the river again and again, that colour, like minor details of construction, has little or nothing to do with the efficiency of an artificial trout fly. When we come to size and shape, however, we must use discretion, for though a fish sees a fly as a silhouette, he is quite capable of distinguishing between the normal and the abnormal in shape and magnitude. Even then, if the abnormally large fly is used in a manner so that it may be taken for something else, the trout will not refuse it. Sink a fly like the Alexandra, or in fact any large fly, work it along with short jerks, and ten to one it will be seized by a trout, under the

impression that it is a minnow in distress, some luscious underwater larva or other desirable tit-bit. Fish a cast of the same sized flies upstream in clear water, and the trout will have none of them, for handled in such a manner they appear abnormally large amongst the natural insects, and the way they are shown to the fish does not give them the appearance of minnows.

Your really keen angler soon learns by experience and formulates his own pet theories on artificial trout flies. In the case of the beginner, however, there is a long list of different patterns from which he can make his initial choice, all of which are proved killers, and with a selection of them in his fly-book, he can hardly go far wrong during his first season.

§ 3. *The "Exact Imitationistic" fly and the "Impressionistic"; two different theories of fishing.*

The majority of river insects are extremely neat and light of form; it, therefore, behoves the angler to dress, or have his flies dressed in like manner. Not only is a neat, lightly dressed fly more like the natural insect, but the hook, especially in the smaller sizes, gets a better chance of taking hold. The majority

of flies supplied by the trade, more especially the winged flies, are sadly overdressed, and thus much of their killing efficiency is wasted. The natural insects found on and about the water belong to many different species, and they are hatched at their own particular seasons ; therefore, the exact imitation theorists use different flies for different months, and often change patterns several times during the course of a day's fishing. Those, however, who set small store by colour and detail, use comparatively few flies of an "impressionistic" character, their general shape and size alone being roughly approximate to the proportions of the natural insect.

The mode of procedure of the two schools also differs. The imitationist notes the species of insect on which the trout are feeding for the time being, and he then affixes to his cast a fly or flies in duplicate thereof. If the fish ignore these patterns, he replaces them with others, these also being imitations of insects on or about the water at the time. It may be that certain insects are late in appearing, but this does not deter the angler from using artificials of those patterns, if, in his estimation, the time is really ripe for the arrival of the naturals. Thus, on a day when trout are

dour and hard to rise, the angler tries change after change of fly until with luck the fish begin to bestir themselves. The idea behind the changing is that the trout are waiting for a certain pattern of fly, and until this is offered them, they refuse to take notice. I am afraid, however, that a fallacy lurks in this proceeding, of which proof is easily obtained. If, when the trout begin to rise at the last change of fly, the latter be removed and replaced by the original pattern first employed, it will be found that nine times out of ten the fish show equal eagerness to take it. At any rate I have put this theory into practice times without number on various streams, and so far it has seldom failed. Apparently sport becomes brisk owing to a change in the humour of the trout rather than to the change of fly.

Having left the imitationist at work, let us stroll farther upstream, and see how our friend who favours "impressionistic" flies is faring. He is hard at work, and appears to be having quite as good sport as his brother angler lower down. If we look into his fly-book, we shall probably find there some half-dozen different patterns at the most, and it will not surprise us if there are only three or four patterns of the type he favours. Some

will be winged flies, but the majority are sure to be spiders, i.e. flies without wings. He opens the ball with, say, a winged fly as top dropper and two spiders below. Like the imitationist, he finds sport dull at first, but his maxim is that of the Scotch gillie, "aye keep your flees i' the wather," and so he pegs away, until suddenly a fish or two begin to show themselves and eventually sport becomes lively. On a really good day, when the trout rush at the flies as if demented, there will be little difference in the weight of the baskets of the two anglers, provided they are more or less equal in the matter of skill. This seems to point to the fact that a so-called exact imitation trout fly is in no way superior to an "impressionistic" fly in the killing of fish. When trout are really in the humour, and provided both types of fly are normal in size and shape, one is just as good as the other; but when the fish are dour, neither type is capable of rousing them from their lethargy. I have briefly touched on the theorists of the two schools, for sooner or later the beginner will have to decide for himself which theory he will put into practice. After all, experience is the best teacher, so I think we can safely leave him to sort matters out unaided.

§ 4. *The hackle.*

In comparing a natural with an artificial fly, probably the first thing the beginner will notice is that the former possesses much fewer legs than are represented by the feather hackle on the latter. There is a reason for this—if the artificial had but three or four single whisks of feather, it would be apt to fall on the water with a splash, no matter how carefully the angler made his cast. The extra hackle in the artificial acts as a buffer between the fly and the water, enabling the fly to alight softly and in a natural manner.

§ 5. *Wet flies (or flies to gut): The gut and hook.*

Wet flies, otherwise known as flies to gut, or in other words flies which are fished beneath the surface, are tied on short lengths of gut. This should be as fine as is consistent with the skill of the angler and the average size of the trout he expects to catch. Fine gut is quite as important as a neat and lightly tied fly, for it is much less visible and disturbing to trout than coarse gut. As the vision of a trout is curtailed by even a small additional volume of water, it is customary to use flies of various sizes, according to the height and volume of the stream at the time.

When a flood is subsiding or the river is rising, rather larger flies should be used than when the water is at its normal level. In low, clear water, such as one often experiences in June and July, quite small flies on the finest gut will always rise more fish than larger sizes. It should be remembered, however, that flies dressed on the smallest-sized hooks, such as 00 and 0, take a very shallow hold, and though they may *rise* more trout than flies dressed on larger sizes, such as 1 and 2, more fish will be *secured* by the latter, as they bite deeper. It pays, therefore, to use the largest-sized hooks consistent with the state of the water and the mood of the fish. In the hands of an expert angler, the larger-sized hooks do wonderful execution, even in the clearest water, but then the dressing on them is always kept to the smallest possible dimensions. When trout are taking really freely, the flies are often torn to pieces by the teeth of the fish. So keen are they that I have known them take a spider fly, and take it ravenously, when every particle of feather had been stripped from it, and nothing but the bare silk dressing of the body remained.

Wet flies are dressed on either sneck bend or round bend hooks. In the sneck hook,

the point is turned outwards to some extent, which is not the case with the round bend. I prefer the latter, because once the point penetrates, there is a dead straight pull, whereas when the line tightens on a sneck hook, the pull is out of the straight. Round bend hooks are less likely to scrape and lose their hold than the sneck bend. Whichever type of hook is used, the dressing of the fly should in no way interfere with the hook-point. In an over-dressed fly the hackle is often inclined to do so. An artificial fly being extremely light in weight, even a small whisk of feather is sufficient to deflect the hook if the trout rises at all short. The bend and point of the hook should be the first

FIG. 11.—AN OVER-DRESSED FLY.

FIG. 12.—LIGHTLY DRESSED WINGED FLY ON NO. 3 HOOK.

FIG. 13.—LIGHTLY DRESSED SPIDER FLY ON NO. 3 HOOK.

thing to enter a trout's mouth, not a length of feather dressing, which protrudes beyond. A trout is remarkably quick to seize a fly and equally smart at ejecting it, so the less

the point of the hook is camouflaged by dressing, the better. Obviously, too, the point should be as sharp as possible, so that it pays to examine your flies at intervals, and if the points have become blunted, a small jeweller's file should be used to resharpen them.

§ 6. *Dry flies: The hackle and hook.*

Wet flies, whether winged or spider shaped, are dressed with soft hackles or "legs." Soft feathers give a much better appearance of life to a fly under water than stiff ones. A dry fly, however, i.e. one that is used solely on the surface, where it floats in an upright position, should be dressed with a stiff hackle, which imparts buoyancy. Many dry flies are double winged, the theory being that such wings give a parachute effect and so aid the fly to drop lightly on the water. Wings of this sort add weight, however, and so put more strain on the hackle, which consequently sinks deeper. Lightness of build is as necessary in the dry fly as the wet; and it is therefore preferable to have one's dry flies without wings and hackled with a sharp cock's hackle at the

FIG. 14.—UPRIGHT DOUBLE-WINGED DRY FLY.

shoulder only. Such a stiff hackle serves the dual purpose of acting as a buffer between the fly and the water when the former alights and enabling the fly to float.

Dry flies are tied on eyed hooks, as they are then less hampered in action than hooks to gut. There are several patterns of eyed hooks, straight-eyed, up-turned, and down-turned, but whichever pattern is used, there is a tendency in the gut point near the fly to curve in the form of a miniature arch. This curve in the gut acts as a warning to the fish, and in nine cases out of ten the trout refuses the fly. In order to get rid of this arch, the gut point should be kept thoroughly soaked, and strict attention must be paid to the amount and length of the stiff hackle on the hook. An over-hackled dry fly causes the eye of the hook to stand some distance above the surface of the water. By reducing the amount of hackle as well as its length to the smallest proportions compatible with the necessary buoyancy of the fly, the undesirable gut kink will be abolished, provided that the gut point is kept well soaked, and so soft and pliable.

In practice, dry fly fishing consists in presenting a single floating fly to a trout which you see rising. . . . When using a cast of

wet flies, you fish over all the likely places, regardless of whether the fish are visibly rising or not. The dyed-in-the-wool dry fly man rather looks down on wet fly fishing, which he has christened the "chuck and chance it" method. He and other members of his school somewhat grandiloquently style themselves "purists," though I am sadly afraid that on days when trout are dour and bad to rise, they are not above resorting to the "chuck and chance it" methods themselves. Joking aside, however, both styles of fishing have their devotees, and both methods kill fish, which is the main object to achieve. . . . To ensure that a dry fly will float, it is generally anointed with a slight amount of odourless paraffin. The cast and a portion of the line are likewise rubbed with grease for the same purpose.

§ 7. *Fly patterns.*

As showing how even expert authorities differ in their opinions regarding the numbers and patterns of flies to be used, we may say that Mr. W. C. Stewart, in his day a king amongst Border anglers, employed but six patterns, all of which were of the "impressionistic" type. The late Mr. F. M. Halford, famous as a dry fly authority, used thirty-

six, all of which were of the exact imitation variety, being as close copies of the natural insects as human hands could make them. Other well-known anglers have given us even longer lists.

In order to give the beginner an idea of what flies to purchase for his first season, I append a short list of all-round killers on both lake and stream :—

River Flies (winged).

Blue Dun,
Red Spinner,
Black Spinner,
Hare Lug,
Broughton Point,
Woodcock and Red Hackle,
Greenwell's Glory,
Black and Blae,
March Brown,
Mayfly,
Alder,
Francis Fly,
Partridge and Red Hackle,
Orange Dun,
Wickham,
Stonefly,
Blue Upright (a favourite in Devonshire).

River Flies (spiders).

Black Spider,
Red Spider,
Dotterel and Yellow,
Snipe and Purple,
Woodcock and Orange,
Dark Grouse Hackle,
Hen Pheasant Hackle,
Bracken Clock
Black Palmer,
Red Palmer,
Hackle Mayfly.

Lake Flies.

Teal and Red,	Mallard and Green,
Teal and Black,	Grouse and Claret,
March Brown,	Grouse and Purple,
Butcher,	Jay and Purple,
Alexandra,	Greenwell's Glory,
Zulu,	Black Palmer,
Teal and Green,	Red Palmer.

If I was limited to a dozen patterns only, for both lake and stream, the following would be my choice—

River Flies.

Black Spider,	Red Spinner,
Red Spider,	Black Spinner,
Dun Spider,	March Brown.

Lake Flies.

March Brown,	Teal and Black,
Greenwell's Glory,	Teal and Red,
Butcher,	Zulu.

Roughly speaking, the majority of dry fly patterns are tied rather smaller than wet flies. Practically all the winged river flies (wet) listed here can be tied to float, and the spiders can be tied likewise with stiff hackles for the same purpose. For dry fly fishing on lakes, floating river flies should be used.

CHAPTER V

WET AND DRY FLY FISHING

§ 1. *Casting the fly.*

Having arrived at the river-side, where he has put together his gear, in the shape of rod, line, and cast of flies, the beginner next attempts to throw his feathered lures in such a way that they will fall softly and in a natural manner on the water. Now, fly-casting is easy enough to an expert; but even he will find considerable difficulty in describing on paper how it should be done. Even a famous angler like Sir Herbert Maxwell confesses himself beaten in this respect. Without wishing to pose as an expert, and with all due deference to the authority above quoted, I shall try to give the beginner an inkling as to how to set about the job. Before doing so, however, I would advise him to place himself in the hands of a skilled fisherman rather than trust to written instructions, for he will learn more from a ten minutes'

practical demonstration by the river, than from a week's perusal of books.

When first the beginner essays fly-casting, he invariably uses the rod as he would a driving-whip, in which case his arm, the whip-stock and the lash all go out together. Now, even when hitting one of the leaders in a team, the distance the lash has to travel is not far. But a fly or a cast of flies has often to be sent some considerable distance; and not only that, but the flies must alight softly, without tangle or splash, and be accurate in the direction of their fall. Assuming that the beginner's rod is stiff and resilient, as well as properly balanced, he will soon be able to fish neatly if he concentrates on casting "from the butt." It is from the rod butt that proceeds the impulse which directs the flies on their journey, which impulse is itself imparted to the butt by the angler's wrist and arm. For in order that the rod shall act, it must spring, and before it can do this, it must be tightly gripped. Once gripped its next movement is confined within a very small area; and with the wrist acting as a lever by which the spring and resiliency of the rod is set in motion or retarded, the forearm moves only so far as is necessary to give free play to the wrist. direction

being communicated to the latter from the eye.

To make his initial cast, let the beginner draw off from the reel sufficient line, say one and a half times the length of the rod. Then, holding the tail fly lightly between his fingers, let him swing or wave the rod, releasing the fly as he does so. When the cast is fully extended in the air behind him, he should then allow the rod point to come forward. If properly done, the cast will fly out straight in front, when the momentum of its fall may be retarded in order to make it drop lightly. The forward stroke should be smart, and the point of the rod should not fall farther than at a right angle to the fisherman's body. The cast of flies having alighted softly on the water, to repeat the stroke, raise the point of the rod slowly upwards, until as much line as possible is clear of the surface, then, with a smart upward and backward lift, line and cast are made to fly out straight behind. In the backward stroke, the rod point should not go farther than an angle of forty-five degrees to the body; and when the line is in the air behind, time should be allowed it to straighten, otherwise when the forward stroke begins, the fly or flies are very liable to be cracked off. If the rod point also is

allowed to go too low behind, the tail fly is apt to catch on grass or other obstacles, and when brought forward, the sudden strain may smash the rod top. One throws a fly more by instinct than reason, and the act is much easier to perform than describe. Put succinctly, the art lies in casting with the butt and from the wrist. The forearm and wrist combined start the impulse on its way to the rod, and if the angler's elbow be strapped lightly to his side, he should be able to cast quite as neatly and well as if his entire arm was free.

§ 2. *Wet fly fishing: fishing downstream and playing a fish.*

Having acquired the art of making the flies alight softly, the beginner will naturally wish to get on terms with a trout. Practice casting is at first best done downstream, and the same thing applies when beginning to fish. Approaching as near to the river bank as the eyesight of the fish will permit, and with due regard to the volume of water in the river at the time, the angler throws his flies across and slightly upstream, allowing the current to swing them round and down. When straight downstream, or a little before they reach that position, he

repeats the cast, taking a step or two downstream himself as he does so. The point of the rod should be kept fairly high, so as to ensure as little slack line as possible between the rod and the flies. The current helps to keep the line taut, and when a fish seizes a fly, he practically hooks himself. In the excitement caused by the sight of a rising trout, and the "pluck" communicated to the line, the beginner is nearly sure to strike involuntarily and much too hard. He then either pulls the fly away from the trout's mouth altogether, or he sets the hook roughly and the frail gut parts under the sudden strain.

After the loss of a few flies, however, he will gradually get himself in hand, until at length he is fast in a fish. If it happens to be a heavy trout, the period of connexion between the angler and his quarry may be short, especially should the fisherman keep too tight a line. Accordingly, while making sure that the line is tight enough to enable you to feel your fish, you should humour your quarry to some extent by letting him go when he makes a rush, and winding in line when you get the chance. Should the trout leap into the air, the rod point must be momentarily lowered, otherwise the cast may part. The instant, however, the fish

returns to the water, raise the rod again, and keep all the strain you dare on the line. By degrees his rushes will become fewer and more feeble, until at last he lies on his side exhausted. Then is the time to sink the landing-net, and draw him unresisting over it, raising the net to enfold him as you do so. He may make a last effort on seeing the net. If he does, let him go, until he is too tired to rebel further. Never make hasty pokes at a fish when trying to land him, always sink the net, draw him over it, and then raise it.

Having caught one or two fish, you are entered to the sport, for you will have little difficulty in handling any future victims, as the antics of one hooked trout are more or less similar to the evolutions of others under like circumstances. After a certain amount of practical experience, you will thus be able to judge to a nicety the amount of pressure you may bring to bear on a hooked fish. Sometimes even you will risk a smash by holding on willy-nilly, when a trout is endeavouring to reach some safe retreat, such as a thick weed-bed, or a tangle of roots. For once let him reach a refuge of the sort, and he is likely to break you anyway; so you may just as well breathe a short prayer, and try to hold him in the open.

§ 3. *Upstream fishing; and where to fish.*

Having landed a number of trout by downstream angling, the beginner will be wise to make trial of the upstream method. Whichever system you employ, however, always keep on the shallow side of the water, so that you can fish the opposite and deeper side, where the good trout lie. Proceeding upstream, you approach a likely reach. First take a cast or two on the near side, then throw your flies partly up and partly across from where you are standing. Your line and cast combined should be long enough to reach close to the opposite bank. When the flies alight, let them sink an inch or two beneath the surface, and allow them to float downstream for several yards, raising the rod point so as to keep the line straight and as little of it in the water as possible. Having completed their drift, the flies are then lifted and a fresh cast essayed. After each throw, walk a step or two upstream and cast over fresh water each time. Unless a place appears extra promising, or you get a rise and miss it, you need not throw more than twice at the same spot; if, however, the water is very deep or rough, half a dozen attempts may reward you with a fish at last.

A very killing plan, when fishing the deep

water under the far bank, is to drop the flies on the bank and then draw them carefully off, so that they fall lightly on the water. If a good fish sees them, he seldom fails to rise. The edges of the pools generally afford the most fish, though heavy trout are often hooked in the main current; and pools rippled by a breeze are easier to fish than those in a dead calm. When approaching a pool where bushes afford camouflage, it is better—if you are dressed in inconspicuous garments—to step *in front* of them, using them as a background, rather than peer over them. If you see a good fish rising, keep casting a foot or so above him, until he either takes the fly, or ceases to rise. But when the trout are taking the fly well, the angler should work quickly, wasting as little time as possible over landing and creeling his fish. The rise is at all times uncertain, and so it pays to "make hay while the sun shines."

Streams and fast water are fished exactly the same as pools. As little line as possible should be kept in the water, and the rod point raised to ensure a fairly tight line. A rise is of course harder to see in rough water, but practice and experience soon enable one to strike at the right moment. Casting partly up and across is better than straight

up, as all three flies get more of a chance to show themselves and cover more water. Trout often do take a fly at the instant it alights, but the cast should always be allowed to travel a short distance before being picked off the water. On a big river, where it is impossible to cover the water from bank to bank, you are of course obliged to do the best you can on your own side. If it is possible to wade, by all means do so, as you can then keep right behind the fish, and being on a lower level than when angling from the bank, you are more out of the trout's angle of vision.

In Chapter I, I have described where trout lie at different seasons of the year, and the novice should remember this and act accordingly.

§ 4. *Wind.*

One of the greatest bugbears of the angler, when river fishing, is wind. A moderate breeze upstream certainly is an aid to getting out the flies; but the breeze is quite as likely to be downstream or at some other inconvenient angle. Still pools can, of course, be more easily fished when the wind ruffles them, as the movement helps to blur the trout's vision, just as an additional volume of water does. Should the angler be com-

pelled to fish against the wind, he will at once recognize the advantage under such conditions of a stiff, resilient fly-rod, and a fairly heavy line. It is often hard and trying work, but the beginner should keep pegging away, for he is not proficient in the angler's art, unless he *can* perform respectably against a breeze.

§ 5. "*Keep your flies in the water.*"

If you are out to make a record bag—an object that most anglers fondly hope to achieve every time they sally forth—always "keep your flees i' the wather," and fish as if you expected a rise at every cast. Angling has been called "the contemplative man's recreation"; but the fly-fisher who spends his time in contemplation will, I am afraid, return home oftener than not with an empty basket. Certainly if trout absolutely refuse to rise, or you are tired—fly-fishing can be extraordinarily hard work at times, especially under a hot sun—a rest and a soothing pipe are admissible; but a wary eye should be kept on the water for the first sign of change or movement.

§ 6. *Dry fly fishing: Outfit and method.*

The majority of would-be anglers begin their fly-fishing career by using wet flies, but sooner or later they are attracted by the promise of the dry fly method. As previ-

ously mentioned, a dry fly is dressed on an eyed hook, and so constructed that it will fall upright on the water and float. It is generally used on pools, or glassy glides, where the surface of the water is smooth, but, contrary to general opinion, it can also be employed in rough water, for wherever the natural insect can float, there can the artificial do likewise. It is, in fact, possible to fish successfully with a cast composed of two wet flies and one dry, or two dry and one wet, but as a rule a single dry fly is considered sufficient, especially on the chalk-streams of the south, which are the dry fly " purist's " hunting grounds *par excellence.*

The average wet fly outfit is not exactly fitted for dry fly fishing; still if the novice possesses a stiff, resilient rod, he can try his hand with it. A dry fly rod proper is a powerful weapon, the power being required to resist the strain of constantly drying the fly after a cast, by whisking it through the air. A 9-foot or 10-foot rod is amply long enough. As a good deal of force is required to drive the fly to the desired spot, a fairly heavy line—heavier than the average wet fly line—should be attached to the reel. The tail end of the line, however, must be quite fine, and is accordingly tapered. The

degree and weight of the taper is best decided after ascertaining the power of the rod with which it is to be used. The correct weight of line will bring out the full power of the rod, without putting undue strain on the weapon. Just as the line forms a perfect taper with the rod, so should the cast form an equal taper with the line to which it is attached. Dry fly casts are usually from 2½ yards to 3 yards in length, and the fineness of the taper depends on the size and weight of the fish likely to be caught, as well as on the temperament of the angler. The fly can be attached to the gut point in several ways, the diagram on p. 37 showing a simple method.

Dry fly fishing must be practised upstream, as the object in view is to capture a trout which you see rising, by casting the fly a foot or so above his nose and allowing it to float down over him. The fly should appear perfectly natural and untrammelled; therefore, there must be no drag on the line and no small arch of gut close to the head of the fly. . . . Accordingly, the cast and a portion of the reel line are greased with red deer fat; this makes them float and so offset with their buoyancy the drag of the current. The fly is also anointed with odourless paraffin or some such similar preparation. Special

dry fly oil bottles and vaporizers are sold by the various tackle-making firms. . . . Having marked a rising fish, the requisite length of line to cover his position is drawn out by a series of false casts. The cast proper is then made, and the fly alights softly as a snowflake and floats down over the trout. He comes up quietly, sucks it in, and then your rod assumes a delightful curve, as a two-pounder plunges desperately across the stream in his efforts to seek shelter amongst the weed. There ensues a battle royal, but in the end you prove the victor, and as you admire your captive's plump proportions, and brilliant colouring, you begin to think there is something in this dry fly business after all.

§ 7. *Dry fly technique.*

The dry fly, like the wet, can be used in every variety of water, from the placid lake to the turbulent burn. On a typical wet fly stream, you are of course handicapped to some extent by using a single fly, but as already mentioned you can, if you like, fish with a mixed cast of wet and dry flies. On most rivers there are certain reaches admirably adapted to sport with the dry fly, and during the course of a day's fishing it is interesting to ring the changes with wet and

dry lures, and make comparison of their killing powers. Should the beginner, however, live near any of the well-known chalk-streams and have access to them, he will probably begin his angling career with the dry fly, and may eventually become a member of the "purist" fraternity. If he does, he is sure to have some good sport, for the trout of the chalk-streams run heavy, and his basket at the end of the day will contain quality rather than quantity.

After each cast with the dry fly, the line and fly should be whisked through the air some half-dozen times to dry. If a trout ignores the fly and lets it float past him, always pick the line carefully off the water with as little disturbance as possible, and do not be in too great a hurry to do so, because on occasion the fish will turn round and pursue the lure, seizing it with gusto. If you feel a bit uncertain about placing the fly exactly on the right spot, do not allow it to alight badly; rather, make an extra false cast or two, until hand and eye become exactly attuned. Should the cast or line be partially drawn beneath the surface, or not fall quite straight, never mind—so long as the fly is floating in the desired direction. It is better to let the whole thing float quietly past

the fish as it is, rather than hurriedly pick it up and put him down by making a disturbance in front of him. Particular attention must of course be paid to the direction of the current, otherwise there is sure to be a drag on the line.

§ 8. "*Fine and as near as you can.*"

There is an old maxim "Fine and far off" that has been quoted in practically every book on angling, but the novice will be well advised to alter this to "Fine and as near as you can." If he be temperamentally fitted to use the finest tackle, by all means let him do so, but it is a mistake to make longer casts than is absolutely necessary, for the simple reasons that it is more difficult to strike promptly with a long line out than with a short one, and there is not the same instant control over a hooked fish. It is much better to wade and practise the art of stalking and camouflage than trust to distance and a long line, to keep you out of the trout's sight. A short cast is easier to make, too, than a long one, particularly where accuracy is concerned. Casting for distance is right enough at a tournament, where you are "fishing" for prizes in the shape of silver "pots," but on the stream, the nearer you can get to your fish, and the shorter your line, the sooner will you hustle your victim towards the net.

CHAPTER VI

WORM AND MINNOW FISHING

§ 1. *Worm and minnow fishing.*

Once the beginner becomes thoroughly enamoured of fly-fishing, he will be hard to wean from it, but under certain conditions other modes of angling pay better, such as worm and minnow fishing. At any time during the summer months the river is liable to come down in spate, and as the water rises and increases in volume, it becomes more and more opaque. Under such conditions the fish cannot see artificial flies, and so the angler must either possess his soul in patience till the stream begins to subside, or else try his luck with the worm.

When the river begins to rise, the trout are on the look out for food in the shape of worms or other edible matter washed down by the current. With the increase in volume, and thickening of the water, the trout's vision is restricted, so that the worm fisher can

stand close to the edge of the bank with impunity. Worm fishing in flooded waters is rather a coarse performance, but it kills fish, often too some of the heaviest, so the novice will naturally wish to try his hand at it.

§ 2. *Worm fishing: Outfit.*

Fine tackle is unnecessary, owing to the volume and colour of the water. An ordinary stiff fly-rod will serve the purpose well enough, though a rather longer rod, as mentioned later in clear-water worm fishing, is better. Using a 9-foot or 10-foot fly-rod, however, the angler can substitute fly for worm when

FIG. 15.—McKENZIE BEND HOOK.

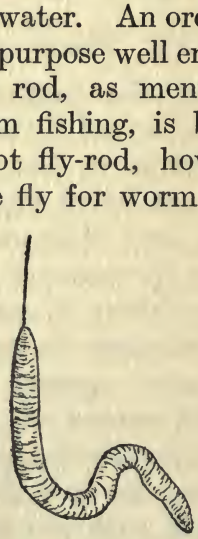

FIG. 16.—THE SAME BAITED WITH WORM.

the river begins to clear, and so one rod serves a dual purpose. A strong gut cast, about a yard or a yard and a half in length, is attached to the reel line, and a single hook,

or a three-hook Stewart tackle, is affixed to the point of the cast. A round hook or one of the McKenzie bend pattern is generally used. I prefer the latter, as the bend is less acute, and the gape wider, which makes it easier to bait. The Stewart tackle consists of three hooks, one above another, at short intervals. To bait it, the hooks are stuck into the worm in almost any position. Using the single hook, the worm should completely cover it, leaving a portion to wave free beyond the point.

Fig. 17.—Stewart Tackle baited with Worm.

§ 3. *Worm fishing: Method; Flooded and clear water.*

When a trout seizes the bait, a tug-tug is communicated to the angler. If he is using a Stewart tackle, he should strike firmly and at once. If, on the other hand, he is fishing with a single hook, he must allow the trout a second or two in which to get the worm well into its mouth. Very often trout gorge or partially gorge the single hook, whereas the Stewart tackle is generally found in the mouth of the fish. If strong gut is

used, a hooked trout can be swung unceremoniously ashore.

There is, of course, a certain amount of expectancy and mild excitement connected with worm fishing in flooded water, but it cannot compare with the fine art of fishing the worm upstream in low, clear water. In a flood, trout do not move very far upstream or down, though they may come in closer to the banks, and are usually found in the shallower reaches. Wherever the rush of the stream appears to be broken, a fish or two are sure to be lurking, and these places as well as the shallow edges should receive attention. One can fish upstream or down, but the latter is the best, for after the water clears, the river can be fished back upstream with the fly. But with the advent of June, most of the streams are usually at dead-low summer level, and with the sun beating pitilessly down on the shrunken pools, fly-fishing in the daytime is decidedly at a discount. Then is the time to fish the clear-water worm, which, besides being an art, is a deadly method of killing fish.

Although an ordinary stiff fly-rod of 9 feet or 10 feet can be used, the angler will be better equipped with a special weapon if he means to practise this phase of sport regularly.

Fishing the fly, you can, if need be, cast a long line without harming your feathered lures; but a worm, even if it has been toughened, is but a fragile bait, and, therefore, you must depend more on length of rod than line. The worm is thrown by a forward underhand swing, or by a side swing from left to right and *vice versa*. Thrown overhead like a fly, it would soon be flipped off the hook. Some anglers use a double-handed rod for this style of fishing, but a single-handed one will be found much more convenient and less tiring on a hot summer's day. A rod from 11 feet to 12 feet, composed of whole cane and greenheart, makes an ideal weapon, being very light in weight. It should be pretty stiff, in order to allow of quick striking, and most of the weight should be in the butt. The great thing in clear-water worm fishing, as in fly-fishing, is to have absolute control over your line, and here again the old maxim "Fine and far off" is much better changed to "Fine and as near as you can." Never have more line out than you need; for, using an 11-foot or 12-foot rod, you can approach trout quite closely, even when they are lying with half their backs out of water, on the shallows.

In low, clear water, your gut cast must be

of the finest. Some anglers prefer a 3-yard cast, but I prefer one of 2½ yards; a good portion of the reel line is then always visible, and a tremor in the line caused by a trout is easier to see than if practically the whole cast from rod point to bait is composed of gut. The same thing applies to worming in flooded water, when the gut may profitably be even shorter still. The cast should taper from about stout trout to 4x. Either the single hook or the Stewart tackle is fixed to the point of the cast. To bait, proceed as described for worming in a flood.

If you are worm fishing in a spate, fresh worms will prove satisfactory, but for use in clear water, they should be cleaned and toughened. Medium-sized worms are the best. Almost any kind of worm may be used; but the pink-headed ones found in rich soil, the brandling and the black-headed sort are as good as any. To scour and toughen them, first wash them, then place them in a jar with plenty of moss. The latter should also be washed, wrung out, and any particles of rubbish picked from it. Every other day or so the jar should be examined, and any dying or sickly worms picked out, and the moss changed. When fishing the worm in flooded water, it is advisable to weight the

cast slightly with one or two small split-shot. In clear-water worming, however, it is inadvisable to do this, because it interferes with the free passage of the worm. Worms are best carried in a kidney-shaped tin box, attached to a waist belt. This device will be found much handier than a bag. The box should contain two compartments, one for the worms, the other for a small quantity of fine sand, into which the angler's fingers can be dipped, thus making the handling of the worms much easier, and less disagreeable.

Approaching a likely reach, the angler swings the bait upstream, and allows the current to trundle it down, raising the point of his rod so as to keep a fairly tight line. The first indication of a fish will be shown by the stoppage of the bait. Now and then the latter is held up by some obstacle; but if a trout seizes it, a tremor of the line gives warning of the fact. Using the single hook, the angler should strike when the trout starts to move off with the worm; but with the tackle he should strike at once. Trout take the worm best in the early morning, some of my best baskets having been made soon after daybreak. They will, however, often afford good sport during the hottest part of the day.

Upstream worming is rather a back-aching business, as one is compelled to crouch more or less when approaching likely places. Occasionally trout come short at the worm, exactly as they do with the fly. They appear just to nip the bait and at once release their hold, the quickest turn of the angler's wrist being too slow to set the hook. The worm should be cast into shallows, streams and all likely runs between stones. Except in winter, it is the shallows which the fish prefer, and there they will be found at midsummer.

As a means of killing trout, clear-water worming is second to none. It is possible to make some very heavy baskets by this method. Many keen anglers have to take their holidays when the powers that be give the word, and at times when fly-fishing during the day is at a discount. If, therefore, the beginner chances to be one of the unfortunates, let him not despair, but instead let him practise the art of upstream worming, and he will seldom return with an empty basket. At the approach of dusk he can then change from worm to fly, and until it becomes dark or even later, he will find the trout by no means disinclined to accept his feathered lures when the heat of the midsummer's day is over.

§ 4. *Spinning or fishing the minnow : Outfit.*

Turning from worm to minnow, we come to an exciting branch of the trout fisherman's art. Although occasionally very heavy fish are taken on the fly, it is seldom that a real "specimen" trout falls to that lure. Using the minnow on the other hand, the angler frequently strikes some of the "whoppers" inhabiting both lake and stream. Fishing the minnow on a river is known as Spinning.

It can be practised with a stiff fly-rod, if the latter is only used occasionally, but the angler who employs this method frequently will be well advised to use a special weapon. At one time, long double-handed rods were used for spinning, and the angler cast his bait into flooded waters, when the stream was beginning to fine down from its initial rush. Since those days, however, great improvements have been made in rods and tackle ; and we owe a good deal to American anglers and manufacturers for their enthusiasm in perfecting the short rod for up-to-date bait-casting or spinning. For trout spinning an 8½-foot casting rod is a useful size. Such rods decrease in length as they increase in strength. A rod suitable for salmon or pike may even run from 5 feet to 7½ feet. When in Canada I had one or two

very good American bait-casting rods made of tubular steel, which stand an enormous amount of hard wear. The best short spinning rods, however, are made of split bamboo, greenheart, bethabara and other woods.

In conjunction with such a rod a special reel and line are required. The line is of dressed silk, and thinner than that used when fly-fishing. When casting a minnow or other spinning bait, the line should run off the reel easily, with no tendency to stickiness. Cast from an ordinary free-running reel, the line, unless checked as the bait enters the water, will overrun, and form what is commonly known as a "back lash." A section of line so tangled is most difficult to undo, so nowadays several patent reels have been invented, which entirely do away with any chance of such a *contretemps*. One of the best of such reels is known as the "Silex." It is actuated by a finger-lever, which, when pressed, allows the reel to run freely; when the lever is released, the reel is instantly in check. Attached to the line is a trace about 1½ yards long. This is in three lengths of gut, or very fine twisted wire, with two or three swivels to prevent it from twisting when the bait is spinning.

The bait consists of a natural minnow,

either freshly killed, or preserved; or else an artificial minnow. If the angler employs the natural minnow, the latter is attached to a tackle, such as the "Ariel" or some other of the many patterns provided by the various firms. Artificial minnows are made of different materials, such as celluloid, horn, pearl, metal or quill. I personally prefer a quill minnow $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, when spinning for trout. Being a fragile bait, the natural minnow requires more attention than the artificial. In order to keep minnows alive and fresh, a bait can is necessary, live minnows not being always easy to procure in quantities. But preserved baits are not so desirable for trout. A well-made quill minnow kills splendidly when spinning for trout, and with careful usage will last practically a whole season. One or two such artificials take up little or no room, and often come in useful when trout refuse the fly. Being very light, such an artificial can be cast with a stiff fly-rod if the proper spinning-rod has been left at home.

§ 5. *Spinning: Casting and working the minnow.*

Having put together the tackle, casting is performed as follows. The bait is reeled

up towards the tip of the rod, and the cast is made overhand, underhand, or sideways from left to right or *vice versa*. As the bait flies out, the reel lever is pressed, allowing the drum to run free, and when the lure strikes the water, the lever is released, the reel then being in check, and the line under control. When there is a fair volume of water, it is usual to spin downstream. The bait is cast into all likely places, being usually swung out and across the stream, and allowed to go round and down until it arrives close under the angler's bank, when it may be drawn close up to his feet. Trout are fond of seizing the minnow just before it is lifted from the water, and also when going round and down from the farther bank, so the angler should be expectant of a "pluck" at such a moment. If you see a trout follow the bait, do not jerk it or increase its speed, but continue to spin at the same even pace, and ten chances to one he will take it. A trout seizes a minnow with great dash, and it is an exciting moment when a big fish rushes at the lure. The minnow being armed with one or more triangles of hooks, a fish is usually held pretty firmly, and does not fight so strongly as if hooked on the fly. The motion of the minnow in the water

should be varied. Sometimes a steady pace proves most attractive, while again a series of short runs and halts may tempt a fish. The bait should spin about mid-water depth, the weight of the lure depending on the volume of the water at the time.

Using an ordinary fly-rod, the bait must be thrown underhand and to the side, as the overhand cast is not suited to such a weapon. When spinning the minnow, the angler will always experience the best sport in the fast, streamy water. Right at the head of the roughest streams he will often connect with the largest trout. As the fly-rod is not likely to be equipped with a spinning reel, the necessary length of line should be pulled off by hand, letting the slack line "shoot" as the bait flies out.

§ 6. *Spinning Upstream.*

Upstream minnow fishing can be successfully practised in low clear water, although this method is not to be recommended to the angler until he has had considerable experience. Upstream spinning is very killing indeed, but it requires considerable nicety to do it properly. The bait is thrown as one casts a fly in upstream fishing; it is then spun quickly downstream or down

and partially across. Small minnows and fine tackle should always be used in low clear water. Indeed, with the exception of worm fishing in flooded water, fine tackle always pays best when in pursuit of trout. Some fishermen are capable of using finer casts and traces than others, the temperament of the individual having a lot to do with it. In riding, some people have better "hands" than others, and the same thing applies to angling.

By always carrying a couple of small quill minnows and a trace, many a bad day with the fly can be retrieved. Capital sport has often been had by fishing upstream in the morning with fly, and back again in the evening with minnow.

CHAPTER VII

MAYFLY AND LAKE FISHING

§ 1. *The Mayfly and the stonefly.*

Southern anglers, when speaking of the Mayfly, refer to the green drake, a large, ephemeral insect known to science as *Ephemera Vulgata*. North-country fishermen, on the other hand, apply the appellation to a very different creature. The latter is really the stonefly, whose Latin name is *Perla Bicaudata*. Both these flies spend their larval state beneath the water. In this state the stonefly is known as the "creeper," and is then quite as keenly devoured by the trout as when later on it sports wings. Even when fully matured, the stonefly, besides being ugly, is a clumsy creature, the female only being able to make some feeble use of her wings. The male is known as the "jack," and is quite unable to rise from the ground. The Mayfly proper is a large and handsome insect, and constitutes the biggest lure,

whether natural or artificial, that is cast with a fly-rod. The paradox of the Mayfly is that it usually appears in June. On some rivers and lakes it hatches out in great numbers, whereas on other waters it is entirely absent.

§ 2. *Fishing with the natural and artificial Mayfly.*

Fly-fishing with the natural or artificial green drake, differs little from ordinary angling with the fly. The lure is of course much

Fig. 18.—Natural Mayfly.

Fig. 19.—Artificial Mayfly (Summer-duck Wings).

larger than that ordinarily used, and the gut cast may be rather stronger, as in Mayfly time the big and heavy trout begin to bestir themselves in real earnest. On lakes, particularly some of the Irish loughs, dapping with the natural Mayfly is a favourite method

of angling. The outfit consists of a long rod, to which is attached a very light silk line. The Mayfly is attached to a special hook or hooks, and with the breeze behind him, the angler allows the line to drift out, so that the fly settles like thistledown on the water. On rivers the angler generally uses an artificial Mayfly. The latter is tied on a long may-hook; and if winged, the wings are usually composed of summer-duck feathers. Floating Mayflies are cork-bodied and are thus extremely buoyant. On the dry-fly rivers, where the Mayfly comes on in thousands, a winged or hackled artificial is the fashionable lure. When fishing a single artificial Mayfly, the cast need not be longer than two yards, and may be tapered from stout trout to 2x drawn. The fineness of the taper will, of course, depend on the average size of the trout likely to be caught as well as on the skill of the fisherman. A dry-fly rod from 9 feet to 10 feet in length makes a serviceable weapon for this style of fishing. The lure is cast in the same way as an ordinary dry or wet fly. When the trout are really taking the Mayfly well, a hackle pattern artificial, fished wet, often kills much better than the "floater."

N.B.—When casting with the natural fly,

the angler must do so with care, as the green drake is a fragile insect, and will not stand much handling.

§ 3. *Fishing with the natural and artificial stonefly.*

The tackle for fishing the natural stonefly consists of an ordinary single-handed fly-rod,

Fig. 20.—Male Stonefly

Fig. 21.—Female Stonefly.

Fig. 22.—Stonefly on Two-hook Tackle.

with the usual complement of line, and a $2\frac{1}{2}$- or 3-yard cast, tapered to 4x. To the end of this are attached two hooks, whipped on with silk. The hooks are $\frac{5}{8}$ inch apart, and on opposite sides of the gut, a No. 2

for the top hook, and a No. 3 for the bottom. To bait the tackle, the upper hook is passed through the throat of the fly, while the lower hook is pushed through the abdomen, the barb being underneath. The best time to fish the stonefly is when a breeze is blowing upstream, and an inch or two of fresh water is in the river. A slight rise in the height of the stream washes the flies out, whereas a flood carries them away, and sport with them ceases for the season. The best places to fish are the streams and broken water, and the edges of the gravel beds. With a fair breeze, the pools are also worth attention. Trout take the "creeper" quite as well as the mature fly. Early morning is the best time to begin fishing, daybreak being none too soon to make a start. Towards the end of May, and early in June, the stoneflies hatch out in thousands on the gravel beds of our northern streams; and by turning up the stones at the water's edge, the angler can soon secure a sufficient store of the insects. They can be carried in a tin, such as tackle-makers supply for the purpose. There is at least one pattern of artificial stonefly that kills well, but most north-country anglers prefer to fish with the natural insect.

§ 4. *Lake fishing: Outfit.*

Now and then, the novice will no doubt like to have a day's fishing on some lake or tarn. The outfit suitable for the river is equally applicable to the lake, although a rather longer and more powerful rod may well be used, if there is a likelihood of hooking a salmon while trout fishing. Some lakes hold a fair number of salmon, and it of course takes longer to kill one of these fish with a light trout rod than it does with a more powerful weapon. Still, it can be done, and the victory is all the more pleasing on that account. Trout being the main object, however, an ordinary 9-foot or 10-foot fly-rod is the least tiring to handle during a long day, and many more fish will be killed with it than when using a larger rod, as the smaller weapon strikes quicker and so misses very few rises, especially where the trout run from ¼ lb. to 1 lb. The above applies to fishing from a boat, where the angler usually has a breeze behind him. In angling from the shore, the want of a longer rod is sometimes felt when trout are rising within long casting distance of the bank, but even then if the fishermen will wade whenever possible the short, light rod does all that is asked of it.

Flies for lake fishing are usually rather longer than those for the river, though in a dead calm the small river flies afford the best sport. The size of the flies should be regulated by the amount of wind and the consequent roughness of the water, while the gut cast should always be as fine as the angler dare use. Fishing from a boat drifting with the wind, the flies are cast with the breeze, the point of the rod being raised as the boat approaches the lures, in order to keep the line taut and so ready for a quick strike when a fish rises. A landing-net is a necessity in a boat, and it should be long-handled, in order to afford leverage when lifting a heavy fish, the handle resting beneath the fisherman's elbow. Fishing in a dead calm, small flies and the finest of gut should be used. After the flies alight they are best left alone until the disturbance of their fall has subsided, when they may be slowly drawn in by short jerks.

§ 5. *Where to look for fish.*

Early in the season, trout favour the shallower water round the northern shores of the lake, because that water is then the least cold, as the sun falls more powerfully upon it and the land adjoining than it does

on the south side. As spring advances, however, the temperature of the deep water becomes more equable than that of the shallows, which lose most of their heat at night; the fish therefore resort to the deeps, until such time as the nights become warm as well as the days, and the temperature of the shallows likewise becomes equable. It is the shallows that the trout prefer, so long as the temperature is suitable.

§ 6. *Trolling* (*or harling*).

Really heavy trout in lakes seldom rise to the fly at all, as they prefer more substantial food in the shape of their smaller and weaker brethren and bottom-feed in general. To kill them, therefore, the angler must resort to the use of the minnow, natural or artificial, trolled behind a boat. A trolling rod should be short and fairly stout, and the reel should be capable of holding 100 yards of line. If a gut trace is used, it should not be thicker than necessary, say a couple of grades stouter than the thinnest undrawn. Fine, twisted wire traces can now be had nearly as supple as gut, and of great strength. The natural minnow affixed to a tackle is the most killing bait on most lakes, though big trout often take phantom minnows and other patterns of

artificials quite well. The chief requisite in trolling is a knowledge of the shoals and bays where the fish usually lie. The local boatmen know these places, so the angler is pretty safe if he puts himself in their hands. There is little skill in trolling beyond being able to play a fish when it is on. Once hooked, there is plenty of room in a lake to play and tire out a trout, so apart from the chance of a "smash" all should go well. The minnow should be weighted, so as to keep it two or three feet beneath the surface, and sufficient line should be out, say twenty yards, to keep the line well behind the boat. When trolling, deeper water is tried than when fly-fishing, and very often heavy trout are secured in the deepest part of a lake. On Lake Windermere "specimen" fish are frequently taken on the char trolls, which are sunk to a great depth. Trolling is rather dull work compared with spinning on a river, but it is the only reliable method of taking really heavy trout in lakes.

CHAPTER VIII

NIGHT FISHING

§ 1. *The angler's opportunity.*

At midsummer, when the days are broiling hot and a pitiless sun beats down upon the shrunken river, fly-fishing is altogether at a discount, except in the evening and during the dark hours of the night. It is pleasant to sally forth with the rod when the sun begins to sink, for the air is then cooler, and the angler feels more energetic than earlier in the day.

At night there is a concerted movement of the trout towards the very shallowest portions of the river, where very often the water is barely deep enough to cover them. As the dusk fades into darkness, the fisherman can discard the flies he uses in the daytime for larger lures; and he may also use a shorter and stouter cast. But before attempting to fish at night, he should be perfectly familiar with every hole and corner of the

stream, otherwise he is liable to encounter many pitfalls. In the first place, if the river is wide and deep, and he is wading, which he will have to do on most streams, there is a danger of stepping into some dark pool. With waterlogged waders, even the strongest swimmer may be pulled down, the consequences not being pleasant to contemplate. This is the worst mishap that can overtake him, the others being minor in comparison. Trees and hedges bordering the water are apt to catch the fly or flies when casting, and the line may become tangled on the water without warning, unless from time to time it is drawn through the fingers. So, before setting out for an all-night expedition, it is wise to select your water and become familiar with it by day. A single fly, too, is better than a cast, for the less material you have to get entangled, the more smoothly will your sport proceed. A large fly and strong gut enable you to deal summarily with a hooked fish. The trout must be so dealt with too, for the less you disturb the water the better. Hustle your victim downstream willy-nilly to the net or to hand, and get him into the basket as soon as possible. When you can see to use a net, a single fly also has the advantage of not getting mixed up with the meshes like

a cast. . . . If you have a "smash" or get "hung up" somewhere, a pocket flash-lamp will be found very handy in giving sufficient illumination to set things right.

§ 2. *Flies and method on the river.*

Lying in the shallows, the trout cannot see far in the darkness and readily take a large fly, often rising close to the angler's feet, so long as he is careful to avoid making a disturbance. It is generally understood that a white, yellow or light-coloured fly is best for night fishing, as being more visible to the trout. I think, however, a fallacy lurks in this theory. The definition of colour is: light in subtle distribution amongst matter. When the light fades, colour fades too. It is quite easy to prove this. When darkness falls, step out into the garden, where, during the daytime, the beds are a blaze of colour. What do you see? Nothing but a general blackness, in which colours are absolutely undistinguishable. If further proof be needed, fish a stretch of river at night, and it will be found that the trout then take a black fly quite as readily as a white one or one of brilliant yellow. By using a large fly at night, the angler is not offering the trout anything abnormal in size or shape, because,

under cover of darkness, many large moths, beetles, etc., are abroad. A large fly on the whole is preferable for this reason: its bigger hook gets a good hold and so enables you to handle a trout quickly and, if necessary, more or less unceremoniously.[1]

When fishing at night, it is best to cast across and downstream. In the darkness you can hear the plop-plop of rising trout, but it is impossible to see their movements. By fishing down you keep your line fairly taut, and the instant a fish seizes the fly you feel him.

§ 3. *Night fishing with gentles on lakes.*

Night fishing may be indulged in with considerable profit on lakes. Then, if the angler puts gentles on his fly-hooks, he will often find capital sport. During May, June and July, trout take maggots well, and will often rise to them on a bare hook. For some reason or other, however, they are even keener on them when attached to artificial fly-hooks. If gentles are not to be obtained,

[1] No doubt many an angler has wondered whether trout sleep. During some portion of the night there is generally a cessation amongst the feeding fish, and it may be that they utilize this interval for slumber. Being on the shallows, they are free from pressure and interference by the stream; therefore it seems not unreasonable to suppose that there is some truth in the above theory.

a small strip cut from a white-kid glove makes a good substitute.

There is a novelty about night fishing that makes it a pleasant change from angling during the daylight hours. The wild life of the night is abroad, and in addition to the sounds of rising fish one hears the loud hooting of the owls, which rings out with eerie suddenness. Sometimes you may chance to glimpse another fisherman, the otter, at work, who, like yourself, is bent upon securing a succulent dish of trout. Him you may see floating like a log with the current or drawing himself out on to some convenient stone, a plump fish between his sharp teeth. Amongst the debris on the banks rats scuttle about, their squeaks and rustlings adding to the other strange noises of the night. Gradually an indefinite something in the east gives warning of the approach of dawn, and one by one nearby objects begin to stand out from the general blackness. Colour too comes creeping in, until at last the fields are once more green, and the world is awake. Your thoughts then turn towards home and breakfast, not the least interesting item of the latter being a few freshly cooked trout, which came to your net when other people were in bed.

Wet Flies

D = dark
m = medium
L = light

Dry

Montreal (D)
Silver Doctor (D)
Parmachenee Bell
Brown Hackle (D)
Professor (m)
Scarlet Ibis (D)
Grizzly King (m)
Coachman (L)

Red Ant
Black Gnat
Coachman
Silver Sedge

Rangeley

Kennebago Lake
Little " "
Upper " Stream
Seven Ponds

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